

MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR JUSTICE

736 N. CONGRESS ST. (39202)
P.O. BOX 1023
JACKSON, MS 39215-1023
601-352-2269
fax 601-352-4769
www.mscenterforjustice.org

A Mississippi Nonprofit Corporation

KATRINA RECOVERY OFFICE
974 Division Street
Biloxi, MS 39530-2960
228-435-7284
fax 228-435-7285

CONSUMER LAW RESOURCE CENTER
606 Adeline Street, Suite 1D (39401)
P.O. Box 825
Hattiesburg, MS 39403-0825
601-583-1072

October 23, 2006

Chairman Kevin Martin
Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Federal Communications Commission
The Portals
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: BellSouth/AT&T Merger, WC Docket No. 06-74

Dear Commissioners:

I am president/CEO of the Mississippi Center for Justice, a nonprofit public interest law firm providing systemic legal advocacy to advance racial and economic justice in Mississippi. In our country's poorest state, MCJ seeks to advance the economic prosperity of Mississippi's most disadvantaged residents. We support features of the proposed AT&T/BellSouth merger that will give such residents, who are disproportionately African-American, improved access to the Internet and the opportunities it affords for closing the information and technology divide.

The merger has the potential to provide great new benefits for Mississippi's high concentration of low-income people. For example, we understand that AT&T and BellSouth have discussed with the Commission precedent-setting merger conditions that are unmatched by any other communications provider. First, the newly merged company will offer \$10 broadband access to *all* residential customers within the new, combined company's service territory. Second, any current AT&T/BellSouth customer using dial-up service will be offered a free upgrade to DSL, including a free modem. Third, "stand-alone" DSL will be offered to customers at a competitive rate, no longer requiring customers to also purchase voice service. Most importantly, AT&T and BellSouth have made a commitment to deploy high-speed Internet service to rural areas and lower-income residences. All of these provisions have tremendous potential for positive economic impact on low-income and African-American communities.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Fred L. Banks, Jr., *Chair* • Robert B. McDuff, *Vice Chair* • Suzanne G. Keys, *Secretary*
Isaac K. Byrd, Jr., *Treasurer* • Carol Burnett • Stacy Ferraro • Deborah McDonald • Bob Owens • J. Brad Pigott • Carlton W. Reeves
Warren Yoder • Martha Bergmark, *President*



Deep South affiliate of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

We appreciate your concern for growing economic opportunities and improving the quality of life of low-income and African-American Mississippians through *affordable* and *universal* broadband services as a key provision of the AT&T/BellSouth merger, and for this reason urge you to support the proposed merger.

We appreciate your consideration of our views and your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martha Bergmark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Martha" being more prominent than the last name "Bergmark".

Martha Bergmark

cc: Marlene Dortch, Commission Secretary